



# COMMUNITY MEETING SERIES #4 - SUMMARY



WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH

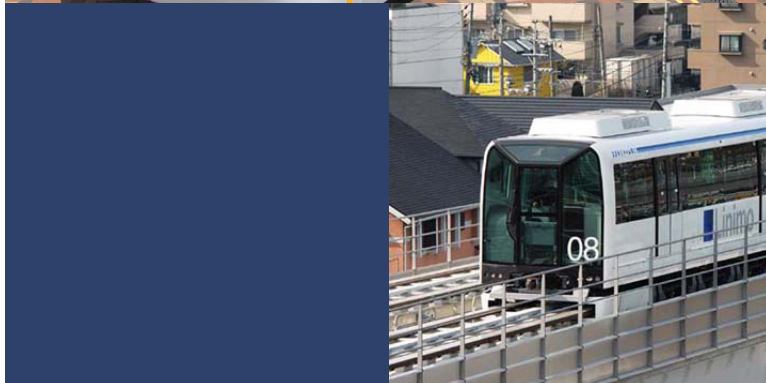
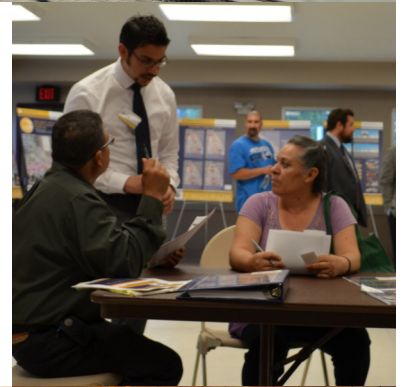


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WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH



# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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### REPORT PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of Community Meeting Series #4, conducted as part of the Pacific Electric Right-of-Way / West Santa Ana Branch (PEROW/WSAB) Corridor Alternatives Analysis. For Series #4, six community meetings were conducted between May 15, 2012, and May 24, 2012. Each meeting was held in a different location within the project study area. The purpose of Series #4 was to share the results of analysis conducted on the Final Set of Alternatives included in the *PEROW/WSAB Corridor Draft Alternatives Analysis Report*. The Series #4 community meetings also provided an opportunity for the public, residents, property owners adjacent to the PEROW/WSAB Corridor (or Corridor), business and civic leaders, transit advocates, and other interested members of the public from the region, as well as elected and appointed officials, to provide feedback on the Final Set of Alternatives. The input collected during the meetings will be considered by the project's Advisory Committees when developing final study recommendations. This report presents a synopsis of the comments that were provided by the public during the community meetings.

### REPORT ORGANIZATION

This summary is organized into three sections: Introduction and Background, Overview of Community Meeting Series #4, and Community Input. The information contained in each section is described below:

1. **Introduction and Background:** Provides information about the PEROW/WSAB Corridor Alternatives Analysis, including an introduction of the PEROW/WSAB Corridor, and an overview of the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process. A review of previous community involvement is also included.
2. **Community Meeting Series #4:** Overviews the objectives and format of Community Meeting Series #4, including the community outreach and communication methods used to promote the community meetings, the meeting schedule and attendance, meeting format, and means by which comments were provided.
3. **Community Input:** Presents a synopsis of the public comments that were received during Community Meeting Series #4.

The appendices to this report provide a record of all comments that were received during the community meetings, and document the information that was presented during the community meetings. The appendices are organized as follows:

- A: Open House Display Boards
- B: Presentation Slides
- C: Comment Cards



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



### PROJECT BACKGROUND

#### **Pacific Electric Right-of Way/West Santa Ana Branch Corridor**

The PEROW/WSAB Corridor was once part of the Pacific Electric Railway, or Red Car system, which provided mass transit service to Southern California from 1901 to 1961. Now owned by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), the right-of-way is known as the West Santa Ana Branch in Los Angeles County and the Pacific Electric Right-of-Way in Orange County. The PEROW/WSAB Corridor has been primarily unused since transit service ended in 1961.

The PEROW/WSAB Corridor forms the core of the 34-mile-long study area, extending for 20 miles at a diagonal between Paramount in Los Angeles County and Santa Ana in Orange County. The AA study evaluated possible transit connections 12 miles north from the termination of the PEROW/WSAB Corridor in Paramount to Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles, and 2 miles south from the PEROW/WSAB Corridor terminus at the edge of Santa Ana to the SARTC.

#### **Alternatives Analysis Planning Study**

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), in coordination with the Metro and OCTA, has completed an Alternatives Analysis study to explore opportunities for a new transit connection between Los Angeles and Orange Counties through the reuse of the PEROW/WSAB Corridor. Initiated in February 2010, the purpose of the AA study was to identify and assess a full range of transportation alternatives and recommend a preferred alternative(s) that addresses Corridor mobility needs in the year 2035. The AA study process follows the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines and standards to (1) provide a reasoned basis for the Recommended Alternative and (2) ensure that the identified transportation alternative is eligible for future federal funding if available.

The AA study process included three evaluation phases to screen a wide range of possible alternatives to the most viable alternative that meets the identified project goals and Purpose and Need. Each screening phase incorporated technical and environmental analyses, along with community and stakeholder input. The first two evaluation phases are documented in the *PEROW/WSAB Corridor AA Initial Screening Report* completed in July 2011. The third evaluation phase assessing the Final Set of Alternatives is documented in the *PEROW/WSAB Corridor Draft Alternatives Analysis Report*, which was released concurrently with the Series #4 community meetings.

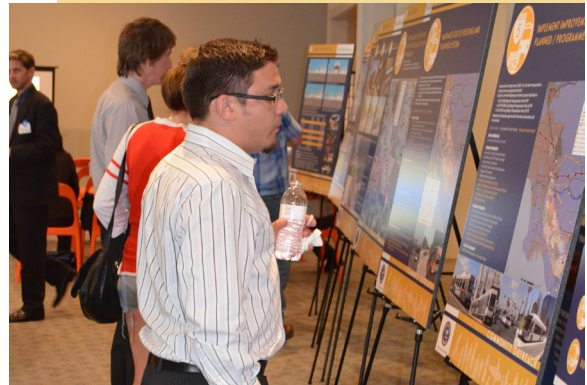
Typically, an AA study results in the identification of a preferred transportation alternative, or phasing of alternatives. As the owners of the right-of-way and the implementing agencies, Metro and OCTA will have the option to continue with the project into the environmental analysis and preliminary engineering phases consistent with federal and state requirements.

### PREVIOUS SERIES OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS

#### Community Meeting Series #1

Coinciding with the initiation of the AA study, Community Meeting Series #1 consisted of six public workshops held between June 15, 2010, and June 23, 2010. A total of 185 people attended the workshops. The purpose of Community Meeting Series #1 was to (1) inform community members about the project, including purpose, process, outcomes, timeline, and opportunities for public involvement, and (2) obtain input to be used in helping to formulate the evaluation criteria and process, alternatives, and public outreach methods.

The summary for Community Meeting Series #1 identified Major Themes that represent a synthesis of participant input on issues and challenges, solutions and opportunities, important destinations, and evaluation criteria for reuse of the Corridor. The summary of Community Meeting Series #1 is posted on the Project Documents page at [www.pacificelectriccorridor.com](http://www.pacificelectriccorridor.com).



**Table 1: Major Themes from Community Series #1**

Issues and Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic congestion and parking availability constrain car travel.</li> <li>Current transit systems do not adequately serve transportation.</li> <li>Public transportation suffers from a negative public perception.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enthusiasm for providing public transportation within the Corridor.</li> <li>Opportunities for development and neighborhood revitalization along with transit service within the Corridor.</li> <li>Widespread support for recreational trails and open space adjacent to a transit system.</li> <li>Consideration for opportunities other than transportation solutions.</li> </ul>
Destinations	Evaluation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad support for connections to existing and future transportation systems.</li> <li>Employment centers, large institutions, and entertainment venues provide the best opportunity for transit use.</li> <li>Stations should be located within an activity center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserving and enhancing quality of life.</li> <li>Balancing the necessity for convenient access to many local destinations with the ability to quickly reach regional destinations.</li> <li>Creating a sustainable system of choice.</li> </ul>

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



### Community Meeting Series #2

Community Meeting Series #2 consisted of a series of six public workshops held between November 16, 2010, and December 11, 2010. A total of 169 people attended the workshops. The purpose of community Meeting Series #2 was to (1) continue to inform community members about the project, including purpose, process, outcomes, timeline, and opportunities for public involvement, and (2) obtain input to help define the Final Set of Alternatives.

A summary of Community Meeting Series #2 identified Discussion Themes that reflect the feedback, perspectives, experiences, issues, and ideas on the Initial Set of Alternatives. Discussion Themes are organized by general input that addresses issues that are relevant to the project as a whole and/or relate to how the Corridor should be used, and themes that reflect specific input on the set of alternatives. A summary of Community Meeting Series #2 is posted on the Project Documents page at [www.pacificelectriccorridor.com](http://www.pacificelectriccorridor.com).

### Community Meeting Series #3

Community Meeting Series #3 consisted of two informational meetings. The first was held on June 27, 2011 in South Gate and the second was held on June 28, 2011 in Garden Grove. The purpose was to (1) continue to inform community members about the project, including purpose, process, outcomes, timeline, and opportunities for public involvement, and (2) provide up-to-date information about the project considering the long duration of the project schedule, and present the Final Set of Alternatives selected for further analysis by the project Advisory Committees.

**Table 2: Discussion Themes from Community Series #2**

General Discussion Themes	Discussion Themes on the Initial Set of Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued enthusiasm for providing public transit within the Corridor.</li> <li>Preserving and enhancing quality of life remains a critical issue.</li> <li>Awareness of the challenges from potential at-grade crossings along the Corridor.</li> <li>Consideration of other opportunities for the Corridor.</li> <li>Concerns over funding for providing transit in the Corridor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a pragmatic and sensible solution, but it has obstacles to implementation.</li> <li>Although not widely considered a right fit for the Corridor, streetcar was a favorable technology.</li> <li>Strong support was expressed for light rail, especially for its potential for serving the community's transportation needs.</li> <li>Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) was generally viewed as unfavorable because of the diesel-based technology.</li> <li>Conventional high speed rail is a good solution to statewide transportation needs, but would not provide access to local destinations needed along the Corridor.</li> <li>Maglev had a mixed reception, with many participants expressing it was an unreasonable solution, but others suggesting a lower speed option that could meet community needs.</li> </ul>

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## OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEETING SERIES #4

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## OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEETING SERIES #4



### OBJECTIVES

Community Meeting Series #4 was intended to:

- Continue to inform community members about the project, including purpose and need, process, current status, outcomes, timeline, and opportunities for public involvement.
- Present final screening results and findings of the alternatives analysis and explain the differences in the implementation of each alternative.
- Obtain public input that will be considered by the Advisory Committees when developing final study recommendations.
- Create a comfortable, engaging environment where all attendees have the opportunity to provide meaningful input.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

The community meetings were publicized by a variety of methods to maximize awareness and participation. Publicity included the following:

- Newspaper display ads were placed within the main news sections of the Orange County Register, Press Telegram, La Opinion, and Nguoi Viet Daily News.
- A press release was distributed to local and community newspapers, including the Orange County Register, Press Telegram, Los Angeles WAVE, Downey Patriot, Downey Connect, News-Enterprise, and Garden Grove Journal, local transit blogs and other media outlets.
- Meeting flyers were provided to cities and agencies, at their request, to be made available in public areas, such as city hall or libraries. Flyers were bilingual (English and Spanish) and trilingual in Garden Grove (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese).
- An invitation was e-mailed to over 500 stakeholders and other interested parties who had requested notification.
- Phone calls were made and announcements were sent to various community-based organizations, business groups, civic organizations, and environmental justice groups located within the cities in the study area.
- Information was provided to public information officers of the cities and agencies in the study area to distribute to the public, post on agency web-sites and message boards, and to notify elected and appointed officials.
- Briefings and interviews were conducted with the project Steering Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.

## OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEETING SERIES #4

### MEETING SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE

Community Meeting Series #4 consisted of six meetings located in communities along the Corridor study area. The meetings were held between May 15, 2012 and May 24, 2012, with each one in a different city in the Corridor study area. The schedule of meetings is shown in Table 3, and a map of the meeting locations and the addresses attendees provided when registering at the meeting are found in Figure 1. In total, 149 people participated in the meetings.

Table 3: Schedule of Community Meetings

Location	Date	Attendees
Santa Ana	May 15, 2012	30
Garden Grove	May 16, 2012	32
Buena Park	May 19, 2012	11
Little Tokyo	May 22, 2012	20
Bellflower	May 23, 2012	32
South Gate	May 24, 2012	24

### MEETING FORMAT

The community meetings provided an opportunity for the project team to share the results of the technical and environmental analysis of the Final Set of Alternatives included in the *PEROW/WSAB Corridor Draft Alternatives Analysis Report*. The community meetings also allowed residents from throughout the region, people who own property adjacent to the Corridor, business and civic leaders, elected and appointed officials, transit advocates and other interested members of the public to share issues, ideas, and perspectives about the Final Set of Alternatives.

#### Registration

Upon arrival, attendees were asked to sign in and were provided a printed copy of the presentation slides that were used during the meeting presentation (available in English and Spanish), a comment card, and a Summary of Final Screening Results presented as a table, which is also included in the Executive Summary of the *PEROW/WSAB Corridor Draft Alternatives Analysis Report*.

#### Open House

An open house was set up in the meeting room and included presentation boards containing information about the PEROW/WSAB Corridor, the Final Set of Alternatives being analyzed, alignment alternatives, a comparison of cost, ridership, and environmental impacts; an overview of the Alternative Analysis



## OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEETING SERIES #4



results; and project schedule (Appendix A). Attendees had the opportunity to review the information on the presentation boards and ask questions to members of the project team.

### Presentation on the Alternatives Analysis Study Results

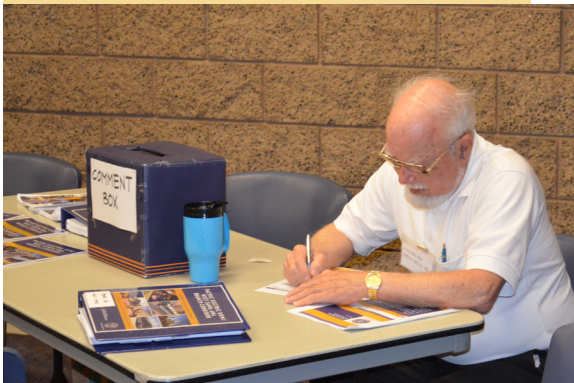
After allowing meeting attendees time to review the presentation boards and ask questions, the project team then gave a presentation on the results on the AA study (Appendix B). The presentation provided a detailed overview of the Final Set of Alternatives that were analyzed in the AA report and focused on the characteristics that distinguish each alternative. A comparison of the estimated, cost, ridership, and environmental impacts was also presented. At the conclusion of the presentation, the project team shared the next steps in the process and identified ways for the public to submit additional comments. Following the presentation, the project team was again available to answer questions.

### Comment Cards

The comment cards were the primary way for meeting attendees to provide comments and included four parts.

1. Attendees were asked to rate each of the alternatives to indicate their level of support or opposition to each of the six alternatives on a scale from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support).
2. Attendees were asked: "What factors are most important to you when evaluating the different alternatives?" Below this question 10 suggested factors were provided and people were allowed to select all the factors that were important to them. A space was also provided for people to add factors that were not explicitly suggested on the comment card.
3. Attendees were asked: "Which transit alternative are you most likely to use?" The four transit alternatives were listed below the question, along with a selection to indicate that they would not use transit.
4. The comment card also provided space for additional comments.

All comment cards collected from each community meeting are located in Appendix C. Additional completed comments were submitted through the project website ([www.pacificelectriccorridor.com](http://www.pacificelectriccorridor.com)), email, and mail.



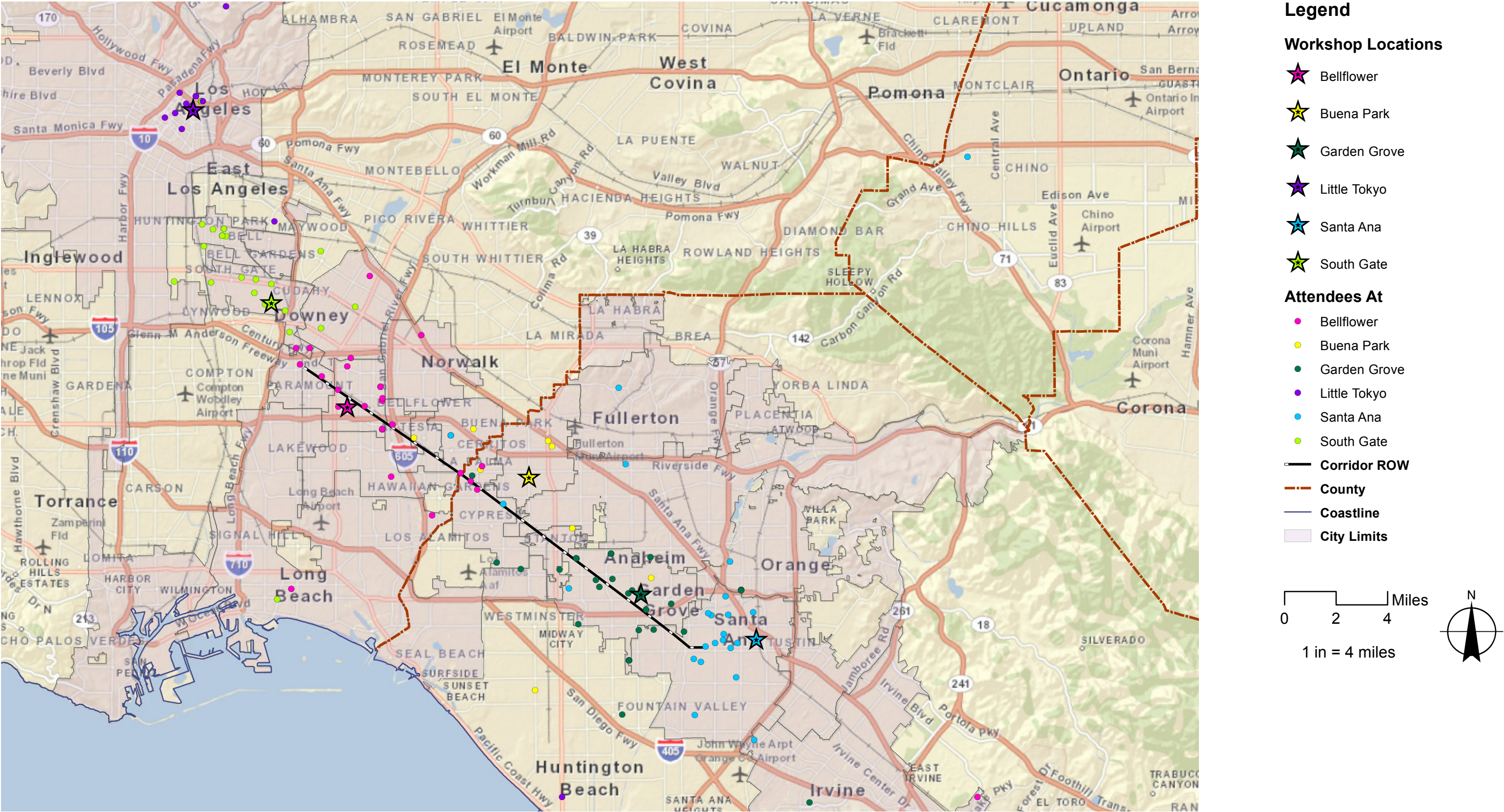


Figure 1: Meeting Locations and Meeting Attendee Addresses

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## COMMUNITY INPUT

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## COMMUNITY INPUT



## COMMUNITY INPUT

The input received during Community Meeting Series #4 is synthesized into a series of Major Themes for each of the six Final Alternatives, and the responses to the three questions on the comment cards were analyzed and the results are reported below.

## RESULTS OF ALTERNATIVE RATING RESPONSES

The comment cards distributed during Community Meeting Series #4 asked attendees to rate each of the six alternatives to indicate their level of support or opposition on a scale from 1 (Strongly Oppose) to 5 (Strongly Support). Although the responses are not statistically valid, they are indicative of the relative level of support or opposition for the different alternatives expressed by the people who attended the community meetings and submitted a comment card. Table 4 provides a tabulation of the alternatives, rating responses from the comment cards that were collected during the community meetings. Responses show that:

- Light Rail Transit received the most supportive responses (Support and Strongly Support) and had significantly more supportive responses than any of the other alternatives.
- Light Rail Transit was the only alternative that had more supportive response (Support and Strongly Support) than opposing responses (Oppose and Strongly Oppose).
- “Strongly Opposed” to the No Build Alternative was the most frequent response and was selected by over half of the respondents.
- Transportation System Management (TSM) was the alternative that received the most “Neutral” responses.

**Table 4: Ratings From Comment Cards**

Alternative	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Neutral	Support	Strongly Support	No Response	Total
No Build	48 (61%)	7 (9%)	6 (8%)	4 (5%)	10 (13%)	4 (5%)	79 (100%)
Transportation System Management (TSM)	24 (30%)	17 (22%)	21 (27%)	6 (8%)	3 (4%)	8 (10%)	79 (100%)
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	34 (43%)	15 (19%)	13 (16%)	8 (10%)	3 (4%)	6 (8%)	79 (100%)
Streetcar	24 (30%)	19 (24%)	13 (16%)	12 (15%)	5 (6%)	6 (8%)	79 (100%)
Light Rail Transit	15 (19%)	3 (4%)	5 (6%)	12 (15%)	40 (51%)	4 (5%)	79 (100%)
Low Speed Maglev	28 (35%)	11 (14%)	6 (8%)	13 (16%)	17 (22%)	4 (5%)	79 (100%)

## IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Attendees were also asked: “What factors are most important to you when evaluating the different alternatives?” Below this question, 10 suggested factors were provided and people were allowed to select all the factors that were important to them. A space was also provided for people to add factors that were not explicitly suggested on the comment card. The factors that were suggested are presented in Table 5, along with the number of responses and percentage of total responses that indicated that a specific factor was important.

As shown in Table 5, community benefits and connectivity to other transit were the most important factors to respondents when evaluating different alternatives, and both were considered important by nearly half of all people who submitted comment cards.

Table 5: Important Factors to Consider

Factor	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Community Benefits	38	48%
Connectivity to Other Transit Services	38	48%
Speed of Travel	33	42%
Cost to Build	30	38%
Community Impacts	28	35%
Reliability	27	34%
Cost to Ride	25	32%
Number of Transfers	17	22%
Other	12	15%
Ease of Building	11	14%
Already Operates in Southern California	11	14%



### TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE MOST LIKELY TO BE USED

When attendees were asked: "Which transit alternative are you most likely to use?" on the comment card, the majority of people responded they were most likely to use Light Rail, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Transit Alternative Most Likely to be Used

Alternative	Percent of Total Responses
None	13%
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	3%
Streetcar	5%
Light Rail Transit	51%
Low Speed Maglev	20%

### MAJOR THEMES

The input received during Community Meeting Series #4 is synthesized into a series of Major Themes Statements for each of the six Final Alternatives. The Major Themes reflect the general feedback, perspectives, issues, ideas, and other comments received on the comment cards, submitted through the project website, email, and mail. The Major Themes are intended to provide insight into the sentiment and topics that reoccurred frequently. The Major Themes are listed below and further discussed on the following pages:

- Concerns about transit funding, feasibility, and impacts.
- Additional transportation options are needed to meet future transportation needs of the growing region.
- Consider additional uses of the Corridor instead of, or in addition to, transit.
- Measures that improve the efficiency of the region's transportation system should be implemented to alleviate congestion but are not a substitute for transit.
- BRT is practical, but is not the best transportation solution for the Corridor.
- Although adequate, Streetcar is not the ideal transportation solution for the Corridor.
- Light Rail Transit is the best investment of all the transit alternatives and would provide a beneficial transportation solution for the region.
- The cost of providing Low Speed Magnetic Levitation is prohibitive, but the technology could provide a new solution to meet future transportation needs.



## Concerns about transit funding, feasibility, and impacts.

Some community members that supported the No Build Alternative expressed concerns about the high overall cost of providing transit, as well as the limited sources of funding, and the generally troubled state of government finances. Community members, especially those who live, operate businesses, and own property adjacent to the Corridor also expressed a strong desire for preserving quality of life in areas near the Corridor, and shared specific concerns about potential impacts to air quality, aesthetics and privacy, noise, property values, traffic (especially at intersections), and safety.



## Additional transportation options are needed to meet future transportation needs of the growing region.

Most community members were enthusiastic about providing transit in the Corridor, and they commented that the Corridor was a unique and valuable asset that should be used to provide additional transportation options. Community members who opposed the No Build Alternative often commented that it would be a continuation of the status quo, and that there would be consequences for not proactively taking action to address the region's transportation problems. The No Build Alternative would rely exclusively on freeways for regional transportation and would not provide a solution as congestion worsens as the region grows in the future.



## COMMUNITY INPUT



**Consider additional uses of the Corridor instead of, or in addition to, transit.**



Overall, community members generally supported the use of the Corridor for recreational purposes in conjunction with transit service. Other comments specifically addressed the use of the Corridor as a transportation route for bicyclists. A few community members commented that the Corridor should be used for only for open space and recreation instead of transportation.



**Measures that improve the efficiency of the region's transportation system should be implemented to alleviate congestion.**



Overall, community members supported the TSM Alternative as a way to address the region's transportation challenges in the short term, but not as a comprehensive long-term solution. Many community members opposed the TSM Alternative because it does not provide an alternative to the congested road and highway network. Community members who expressed support for the TSM Alternative often commented that improvements to existing bus service, providing pedestrian and bicycle paths, and other small improvements to the transportation system would be most effective in combination with providing a transit option in the Corridor, and the improvements would likely be insufficient without a transit option. Overall, the low-cost solutions included in the TSM Alternative were supported by many community members.



## **BRT is practical but is not the best transportation solution for the Corridor.**

In general, community members were not very enthusiastic about the BRT Alternative as a transportation solution in the Corridor. However, some community members thought that its relatively low cost, the speed in which it could be implemented, demonstrated success in the region, adaptability, and that no transfers would be needed between Santa Ana and Los Angeles made it a practical transportation solution. Some community members commented that BRT was better than no transportation solution at all, and that it could serve as an interim transportation solution and a precursor to another solution in the future. Other community members were opposed to BRT because it is an old technology and would not appeal strongly enough to people to choose it over driving. In addition, many community members commented that BRT would not meet the transportation needs of the Corridor because it would have to operate in the already congested street network, leading to unpredictable travel times and contributing to further congestion.



## **Although adequate, Streetcar is not the ideal transportation solution for the Corridor.**

Some community members supported the Streetcar Alternative because it would provide a quality, lower cost transportation alternative that would serve the communities along the Corridor. However, most community members commented that it was not worth the investment compared to other alternatives because it has a similar overall costs and similar noise, safety, traffic, and impacts to adjacent property as other alternatives. The Streetcar Alternative also has a lower projected ridership, slower travel speeds than other alternatives, and it would not be compatible with the existing Metro system.





**Light Rail Transit is the best investment of all the transit alternatives and would provide a beneficial transportation solution for the region.**



Community members expressed strong support for the Light Rail Transit Alternative, and many commented that it was the best out of all the alternatives. Supporters commented that it was the best fit for the Corridor because it would have faster speeds, higher capacity, and higher projected ridership. They also commented that it would not have any transfers from Santa Ana to Los Angeles, and, therefore, is the best alternative to address the region's transportation needs. Light rail transit would also benefit from being compatible with the existing Metro transit system because it would be adaptable and would benefit from using existing facilities. In addition, because light rail transit is already used by Metro, it is known to be reliable, is a proven technology in the region, and is familiar to transit riders.



**The cost of providing Low Speed Magnetic Levitation seems prohibitive, but the technology could provide a new solution to meet future transportation needs.**



The Low Speed Maglev Alternative had support from some community members because it would be faster, quieter, and safer, and would cause minor traffic impacts compared to other alternatives. Some community members believe that, in addition to meeting the current transportation needs, the Low Speed Maglev Alternative is the best long-term solution to meet future transportation needs. Other community members commented that it had a significantly higher overall cost that was prohibitive. Community members also opposed Low Speed Maglev because it would only provide a marginal benefit compared to other alternatives, is an unproven technology in the United States, and would not be compatible with the existing Metro transportation system. Community members were also concerned that the Low Speed Maglev Alternative would potentially require property acquisition that would displace residents who live adjacent to the Corridor.